

California State Journal of Medicine.

Owned and Published Monthly by the
 Medical Society of the State of California

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State Journal,	San Francisco.
Official Register,	

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VOL. XI FEBRUARY, 1913. No. 2

EDITORIAL NOTES

THE LEGISLATURE.

At the time of writing it is impossible to say just what has been proposed in the way of medical legislation, though some things are quite apparent. The usual attempt is to be made to secure special boards of examiners in almost every sort of freak cult. A number of bills have been drawn which may or may not be introduced; one of them provides an entirely new medical law on an entirely new plan, but no copy of the bill has as yet come to our attention. Another proposed law provides for separate boards of examiners for regulars, homeopaths, eclectics, osteopaths, naturopaths and divine healers! An amendment, approved by the Board of Medical Examiners and by the attorneys for the State Society, providing for license without examination in this state of those who have had a bona fide preliminary and medical education not less than that required under our present standards and who have been licensed after a satisfactory examination in their home state, has been introduced. This is the only form of reciprocity that the State Society could possibly endorse. Of course, many of those who have failed to pass the examination of our board are clamoring for a wide-open reciprocity; an amendment that will allow anyone licensed to practice medicine anywhere, to come here and get a license without examination. That is wrong for the reason that there are so many people practicing medicine, and licensed to do so in some one or more states, who never had any medical education to speak of and whose license was secured by merely filing a diploma, which may have been purchased from a "diploma mill" at a cost of from \$50 to \$150. It is only in the last twenty-two years that there has been

any control of medical schools or of medical licensure in the United States, and even now, in many states, what control exists is more theoretical than actual. Many of our legislators do not seem to know these things; many of them seem to think that anyone should have a whack at the business of medicine; they forget that it is a profession dealing with life and death and that the people should be protected as much as possible against incompetence and ignorance.

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UNPLEASANT PUBLICITY.

It must have been exceedingly unpleasant for Parke, Davis & Co., to have *Pearson's Magazine*, in its January number, come out with a most deleriously hectic article on the phylacogens of our distinguished fellow citizen, Schafer. The house seems to be quite honest in its desire to study these products carefully and to market them in a proper manner. They had quite a correspondence with *Pearson's*, beginning in October 1912, and have sent out copies of these letters in which they most urgently begged the magazine not to publish the article in question. But it was quite too hectic a morsel for *Pearson's* to relinquish. Strange days are come upon us when laymen, in lay publications, instruct the world, or such portion of it as listens to them and is impressed, on things medical. To be sure, the world needs plenty of instruction on things of medicine and of public health; but are the Arno Dosches to do it or are medical men to do it? This sort of misdirected enthusiasm does infinitely more harm than good. But what's the use! It's the old story; "controversy equalizes fools and wise men—and the fools know it!"

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A VALUABLE (?) PUBLICATION.

A most remarkable publication bearing the title of the *Army and Navy Magazine* has reached the JOURNAL office. The December number states that the subscription price is \$3.00 per year, but a careful examination of that issue would lead one to wonder whether anyone would ever pay money for it or if, on the contrary, he would not demand a good price for reading it. There is a department headed "Medical and Surgical," Arthur Gordon Lewis, Editor, and this "department" is certainly a wonder! The new postal law is evidently working well, in this case, for pages and pages of stuff of the reading-notice sort which otherwise might be taken for actual reading matter, are marked "advertisement"; truly valuable "medical" suggestions! Among them we find an article on that delightful fake, "dioradin," written by H. F. Boatman, M. D., Los Angeles, in which he reports a case of advanced tuberculosis "cured" by the dioradin fake; but the article is decorated with

the magic words "advertisement." One wonders whether this is the same article that appeared in the *Southern California Practitioner* last April as an "original" contribution to scientific literature; the postal law does not require medical journals to put the word "advertisement" after reading notices.

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LACK OF COORDINATION.

The potential power of the medical profession is enormous; its actual power is almost nothing; we can never agree and never work together. Time, energy and influence are wasted, frittered away over mere matters of insignificant detail or of phraseology or upon things that do not come within our province but are ruled upon by the courts. It was supposed that this year a larger amount of coordination had been secured; but it was not so to be. Dr. Marlsbary, of Los Angeles, has sent out a circular letter to, presumably, from the number of inquiries that have come to the JOURNAL office, a very large number of people, physicians, lawyers, etc., in which a number of questions affecting medical matters and the medical law are raised. (There is not the slightest intention of questioning Dr. Marlsbary's integrity or the fact that he thought he was doing something for the good of the medical profession; only, it was untimely and should have been referred to the proper Committee of the State Society.) A new definition of the practice of medicine is suggested: "the practice of the healing art for a fee." The courts determine the definition of the practice of medicine and there are a number of good decisions on the subject. Further, one may ask whether, if an appendicitis operation performed for \$1,000 is the "practice of the healing art," what is an appendicitis operation when performed for nothing called? There are many other questions that could be asked, but what's the use!

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CONGRESS FOR PHYSIOTHERAPY.

The Fourth International Congress for Physiotherapy will take place in Berlin March 26th to 30th and a rather elaborate program seems to have been arranged. The announcement states that American physicians proposing to attend the congress or desiring to contribute papers should communicate promptly with the Chairman of the American Members, Dr. G. Betton Massey, Professional Building, Philadelphia. Many features of entertainment have been provided for the physicians in attendance and for their wives.

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NEW SOCIETY; OLD JOB.

"To put the medical profession on a business basis, obtain new legislation and rid the country of 'quacks' and many abuses now said to be in existence is the hope of the American Society of Medical Economics, which was incorporated at Albany last week," says the *New York Herald*. Good news! The things this new society is going to do, according to the interview with its founder or sponsor, Dr. E. Elliott Harris, are certainly sufficiently numerous and monumental. It will stop fee splitting and secure to every doctor a better income; it will do away with lodge and contract practice; it will stop the abuse of medical charity in hospitals and dispensaries; it will put an end to the advertising quack. Why certainly! These are all evils within the medical profession itself; physicians themselves are to blame for everything complained of as an abuse or an evil, in the list. The way to correct all these evils is simple; just start a society and "do something"! But principally, start a society; call it anything you like, incorporate or not, but start a society! Never mind the fact that what we complain of is something that we, as physicians, are guilty of doing ourselves; never stop and think that if physicians would refuse to do lodge work, there would be no lodge-practice evil; if they would refuse to split fees, there would be no fee-splitting evil; that if they would not be so anxious to get "material" there would be no hospital and dispensary evil. Pay no attention to these things, but just start a society.

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PROSECUTING ILLEGAL PRACTITIONERS.

Some months ago the physicians of Alameda County decided to raise funds, by assessing themselves, for the purpose of getting evidence against illegal practitioners who were then to be prosecuted by the prosecuting attorney for the Board of Medical Examiners. Dr. David Hadden has sent us the report on the work from July 1st to the end of the year. The work seems to have cost from \$140 to \$275 per month, or a total of \$1,252; 45 arrests were made and \$1,200 in fines were paid with one case on appeal in which the fine was \$250. A number of the cases included in the report were cases of abortionists, some of them licensed to practice. It is a singular fact that the people, who should care the most, seem to care the least whether quacks flourish or not and that physicians should have to find the funds for protecting the people who do not care about being protected!

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